



New Light on HPB's  
Book of Dzyan

- Page 4



Boethius and  
Music

- Page 5

# NewAcropolis

Philosophy and Education for the Future Newsletter

## What's Inside

Plato's Many-Sided Philosophy  
page 2

1913 – 2013: an Age of Shifting  
Paradigms  
page 3

New Light on HPB's Book of Dzyan  
page 4

Boethius and Music  
page 5

Plato's Psychology: a Science  
of the Soul  
page 5

Parsifal and the Fisher King  
page 6

Metamorphosis  
page 6

The Mevlevi Path  
page 7

**Welcome** to the first digital incarnation of our **New Acropolis Newsletter**. With it we would like to disseminate ideas that can stimulate our thoughts, inspire our actions and help us create a vision of the future.

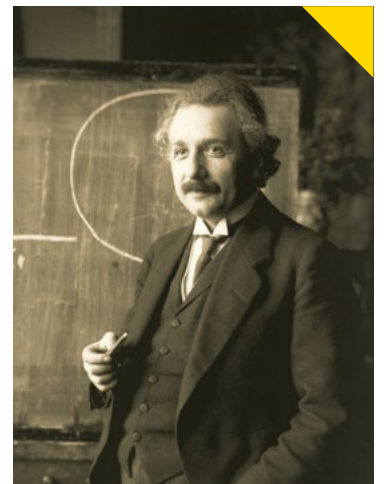
Many of the problems we are facing today will not be solved by more technology or money. Their solution will require a change in our behaviour, which can only be brought about by a change in our thinking. Everything we do is informed by a certain way of thinking. In order to change the way we act, it is necessary to examine the way we think. As Einstein said: "The world we have created is a product of our thinking."

How can we develop new ways of thinking? Our proposal is the practice of philosophy, which is much more than the intellectual pursuit modern academia claims it to be: it is a way of life that can produce a profound transformation within the individual.

This inner transformation is necessary in order to understand more deeply and to grasp higher and more complex truths. As Aldous Huxley stated in his seminal work *Perennial Philosophy*: "Knowledge is a function of being. When there is a change in the being of the knower, there is a corresponding change in the nature and amount of knowing."

This inner growth will enable us not only to use our resources more wisely and act with less devastating consequences on our environment but can also lead us to that inner freedom which is the lasting basis of happiness.

*Sabine Leitner*



Upcoming  
Events  
page 8

The Mevlevi  
Path

The spiritual path of Sufism  
and Rumi's teachings.

Page 7



## Plato's Many-Sided Philosophy

What is love? How can a just society be built? What happens after death? These are some of the questions that Plato, the great philosopher of Athens, addressed.

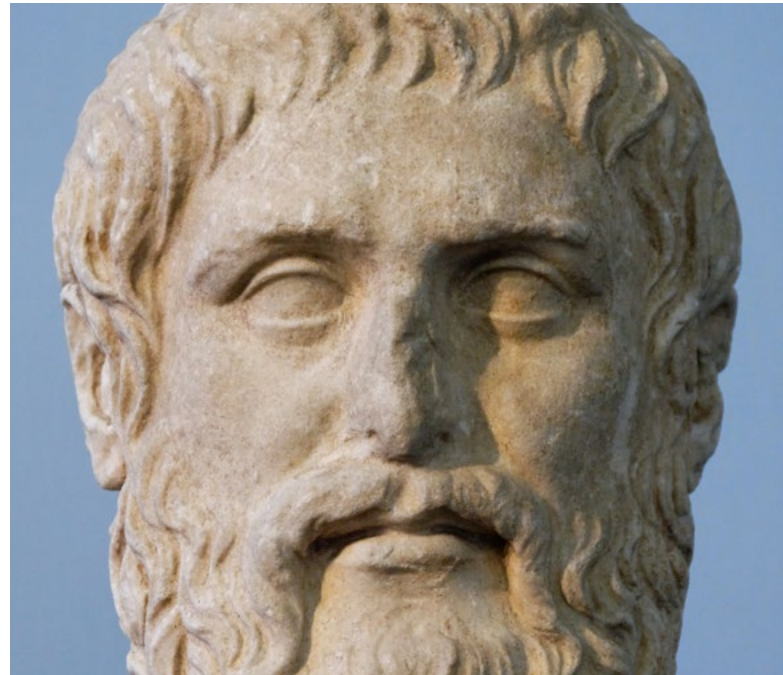
In his youth, Plato (427-347 BC) was a playwright and considered becoming a politician, but destiny gave him another kind of future when he met Socrates, who became his teacher for almost a decade.

After Socrates' death, Plato undertook a long journey to the Middle East and Egypt, where he was taught by their learned men. On returning to Athens, in 387 BC, he founded a philosophy school in the grove of Akademos (later known as the Academy). There, with his followers, he dealt not only with philosophy, but with mathematics, rhetoric and many other subjects. Aristotle, one of his students, studied at the Academy for 20 years. The school was closed around 900 years later, during the reign of Justinian I. What enabled this institute to last for so long? The main reason is to be found in Plato's unique philosophy.

He was among the first philosophers who wrote about love and its importance. Not just in the sense of pleasure, but as a means of connecting with the divine. As he explains, one who can see the beauty in another person has the ability to find beauty in anything. As Socrates describes in the Symposium, we have the desire to achieve immortality. This desire is Eros.

As well as addressing the concerns of the individual, Plato and his Academy also responded to the needs of the community. At first, he tried

to reform the politics of his age, by acting as an advisor of rulers. However, when these attempts failed, he later wrote a book about how to set up an ideal community, based upon justice: *The Republic*. He believed that if philosophers became kings, or kings philosophers, then a happy, just society would result.



Plato. Luni marble, copy of the portrait made by Silanion ca. 370 BC

With his other dialogues, Plato left behind a huge spiritual legacy that inspired the centuries to come. As the English philosopher Alfred N. Whitehead once noted, the whole of Western philosophy is just a footnote to Plato's works.

*Istvan Orban*

## About Us

NEW ACROPOLIS is an international organization working in the fields of philosophy, culture and volunteering. Our aim is to revive philosophy as a means of renewal and transformation and to offer a holistic education that can develop both our human potential as well as the practical skills needed in order to meet the challenges of today and to create a better society for the next generation.

For further details please visit : [WWW.NEWACROPOLISUK.ORG](http://WWW.NEWACROPOLISUK.ORG)

## Editorial Team

Sabine Leitner - Director

Julian Scott - Editor

Agostino Dominici - Project Manager and Designer

Natalia Lema - Public Relations

## 1913 – 2013: an Age of Shifting Paradigms

(This article is an abridged version of a paper presented by the authors at a Conference on Platonism held in November 2013 in Marseille)

Between 1900 and 1913, from the point of view of culture and mentalities, Europe dominated the world with its paradigm of inevitable progress.

However, as the industrial model of the early 20th century spread its mechanistic paradigm over the planet, an important discovery would soon overturn the way people saw nature and the human being: the discovery of the invisible.

### The Discovery of the Invisible

A number of major inventions and discoveries emerged that would form the basis of our modern world. Wireless telegraphy, the telephone, electrical machinery, X-rays, the discovery of the electron and the radio all share a common element: they all function by means of elements that are invisible, that cannot be perceived with the senses.

Thus, the invisible ceased to belong exclusively to the realm of religion and entered the domain of science.

With its theory of the unconscious, psychoanalysis uncovered levels of consciousness beyond everyday awareness. Quantum mechanics revealed the indeterminate nature of the infinitely small, while Einstein's theory of relativity showed that the notions of space and time were not as precise as once thought. In this way, both the physical sciences and the human sciences began to investigate the invisible causes of our existence.

Paradoxically, this new paradigm struggled for several decades against the paradigm that had given rise to industrial society, characterized by a mechanistic, compartmentalized view of the world. When Heinrich Hertz discovered radio waves, for example, he believed that his discovery would never have any practical application.

Today, we cannot imagine that radio waves could be useless. But for these new discoveries to be applied in a practical way, they had to be imagined within a new framework of thought, and people's minds were not prepared for that at the time. Even now, in 2013, most people still have a mechanistic mindset in a world that is no longer mechanistic.

**“ In 2013, most people still have a mechanistic mindset in a world that is no longer mechanistic. ”**

These dramatic upheavals affecting the foundations of consciousness crystallized in 1913, the year of Jung's split from Freud. Jung asserted that “the psyche is no less real than the physical; it has its own structure and is subject to its own laws.” The idea emerged that we should not only be concerned with what is outside the human being, but also with what is within.

### The Rediscovery of the Imagination and the New Anthropology

At the same time the dimension of the imagination was reintroduced into the philosophy of science and literary theory and a new trend in anthropology took an entirely new approach to myths and symbols as links between the visible and the invisible.

It was artists who appropriated these new paradigms in an intuitive way and presented them to the public, while denouncing the model of the industrial society and proposing a return to ancient sources. Great works of art, such as Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, expressed the dynamic of the era, heralding the upheavals to come. Artists seemed to sense the acceleration of time.

### The Birth of the Modern Era and the Transformation of Society

At the same time, the mechanistic, materialistic model seemed to be at its height. Higher, faster, further seemed to

be the catchwords of the day and countries vied with each other to build the tallest buildings, the biggest ocean liners and the most efficient assembly-line production plants. Yet the sense of community was being eroded and human relations were becoming anonymous, economic and bureaucratic.

The great questions that were being posed a century ago still concern us today in 2013: how do we reconcile reason with irrationality? The human with the inhuman? Collective vision with individuality? The visible with the invisible? Culture with barbarism?

We cannot look to the future with an eye only to the catastrophes we must avoid. To flourish we need to dream of a better future for all. Progress may have disappointed us, but nothing is preventing us from learning from negative experiences in order to move towards a positive (which does not mean naïve) vision of the future.

*Fernand Schwarz and  
Guy Ferry*

An early model of a wall mounted telephone



## New Light on H.P. Blavatsky's Book of Dzyan

Over a hundred years ago, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (often simply 'HPB'), the co-founder of the Theosophical Society, presented us with a remarkable book, the *Secret Doctrine*. This work, which is recognized as her magnum opus, discusses in often symbolic and abstruse language the themes of cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis, i.e. the origin and development of the cosmos and of humanity respectively. In their sweep and detail, these teachings are regarded by some as unparalleled in the history of humanity. Ever since their appearance, the earnest student of esoteric lore has been faced with the question: what is the source of those teachings?

HPB, in her writings, informs us that she was not the actual author of this work and that the Secret Doctrine is based on stanzas that she, with the help of her teachers, translated into English from the secret *Book of Dzyan*. Significantly, she further states that the *Book of Dzyan* is linked to the publicly known *Books of Kiu-te* and that translations of these original commentaries (written in Senzar, that she refers as "the lost language of the initiates") exist in three languages: Chinese, Tibetan and Sanskrit.

HPB seems to have left us with some further clues as to the origins of her most famous work and, after decades of painstaking research, some scholars are finding out ever more. The public *Books of Kiu-te* (Tibetan *rGyud-sde*) have been identified as the Tibetan Buddhist Tantras (not to be confused with the Hindu Tantras, which were the only ones publicly known at the time of Blavatsky). Among hundreds of still untranslated works, the now lost

*mūla Kālacakra Tantra* has been linked to the Stanzas of Dzyan. Only in this Tantra does cosmogony play a significant part.

During the past fifty years, an astonishing number of original Tibetan and Sanskrit manuscripts have been discovered and whole libraries of previously inaccessible material have become accessible. For instance, the Nepal-German Preservation Project has microfilmed well over 100,000 manuscripts.



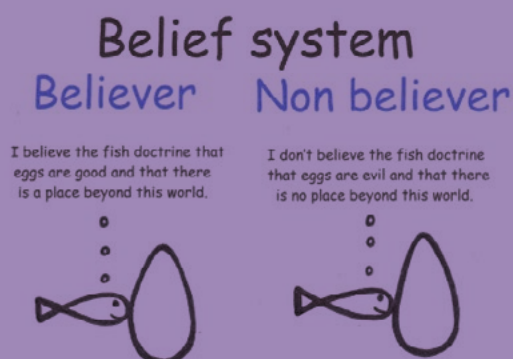
Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891)

The search is still underway and - who knows? - maybe sooner or later the earnest student will be rewarded.

For more details, the reader is referred to David Reigle's book *Blavatsky's Secret Books*.

Agostino Dominici

## PHILOSOPHICAL HUMOR



## Some inspiring quotes

In our struggle for freedom, truth is the only weapon we possess. - Dalai Lama

There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread. - Mother Teresa

Without an ideal, there is no philosophy. - Jorge A Livraga

## Boethius and Music

The late Roman philosopher Boethius wrote *De Institutione Musica*, which was one of the first Western works on music. In it he wrote: 'music is all about "harmony" – the concordant bringing together into a whole of different things'. Boethius introduces a threefold classification of the types of music, human and cosmic. These are:

**Musica Mundana** (music of the spheres), music as a metaphysical principle – and a pathway to the experience of the deepest, universal truths. The primary examples of this music are: the movement of the heavenly bodies, the combination of the physical elements and the changing of the seasons.

**Musica Humana** (music of human spiritual harmony). This refers to the level of the soul or mind, where the moral and ethical potential of music unfolds. In order to understand it, one must "descend into the depths of oneself". It is reflected in the saying of Plotinus: 'Philosophy is a music made by the soul in the silent dimension of the invisible.'

**Musica Instrumentalis** (instrumental music) refers to the instrumental and vocal sounds that can be produced and heard by human beings. The experience of music is a 'gate' to the experience of the higher levels.

Boethius's work had a huge effect on the understanding of music throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance. It was a universal theory which covered material and psychic harmony, the harmony of the cosmos and the harmony of art.

Matina Karastatira

Boethius teaching his students - manuscript of the Consolation of Philosophy



## Plato's Psychology: a Science of the Soul

The word Psychology refers to the study of the Psyche, which in Greece meant "soul" and was regarded as an intermediate entity between Nous and Soma (Spiritual Mind and Body). It is the soul that brings motion and animation into the manifested world.

**"It is the soul that brings motion and animation into the manifested world"**

Plato, however, talked about the soul as having three different functions and how all of those functions are needed within our human nature. Briefly, this

tripartite concept is as follows.

First, a rational part that reasons, makes judgements, discerns and tries to choose what is best for the human being as a whole.

Second, an appetite part that is non-rational and it is driven by desires and the fulfilment of basic needs. Third, a spirited part in charge of dealing with the conflict between the 2 other parts, and will ideally take the side of the reason.

A short example is given in one of Plato's dialogues. If a person is stranded at sea, each part of the soul will react in a particular way. The appetite will drink water from the sea without thinking

of the consequences, while the rational part will think about what is best for the whole and hopefully will be supported by the spirited part in order to make sure the person makes a wise decision.

Life is constantly offering situations in which we have to make a choice. The inner conflict is a human characteristic arising from our nature. A first and important step is to become aware of the existence of these realities and understand what drives our own actions.

Natalia Lema

## PARSIFAL AND THE FISHER KING

Parsifal was the son of a knight who had been killed in combat, and for this reason his mother tried to hide the existence of knights from him.

But Parsifal's destiny was inevitable, for in knightly mythology every hero has a destiny that calls him. So one day he met with a knight who trained him and gave him three pieces of advice: "Never lose your sense of shame"; "Do not importune others with foolish questions"; and "Always remember to show compassion to those who suffer".

Soon, Parsifal set off in search of adventures. In a wasteland, he came to a castle where he found a sick king suffering from a wound that would not heal. He was waiting for a knight who would ask him the question "What ails thee?" But Parsifal only remembered the advice about foolish questions and forgot the advice about compassion. He said nothing.

He then went into the dining hall and a mystical vision of the Grail appeared before him; but again, for reasons of etiquette, he failed to ask any questions.

Having missed these two opportunities through his immaturity and lack of connection with his heart, he was condemned to wander for many years until, one day, fate permitted him to return. Now, moved by compassion and love of wisdom, he asked the necessary questions. As soon as he had spoken, the king was healed and the wasteland became fertile again.

*Julian Scott*



Sir Parsifal receiving the holy grail. D.G.Rosetti (1864)

## NATURE AND US

### Metamorphosis

When we examine nature we see only one history, the history of life. W.B. Yeats once said that there is but one history and that is the history of the soul. Is there a difference between life and soul?

We can observe that life evolves through stages. Often in nature we find metamorphosis, which brings a new form of life even within the same cycle. Studies of the transformations of insects, though they might seem remote from our own experience, provide an insight into nature and may serve to prepare us for a similar mystery of our own.

*The most striking and commonly known metamorphosis is that of the butterfly. In the egg of the butterfly three radically different forms are prefigured (caterpillar, chrysalis and adult butterfly or imago). In the caterpillar stage certain organs are fully functioning, while some remain as small groups of cells that will develop in the next stage or in the adult form. This life force, which*

*must already be present in the egg provides the patterns and regulates the unfolding events in an exquisitely ordered developmental sequence.*

### "Everything in nature appears to undergo some form of transformation"

*Everything in nature appears to undergo some form of transformation. After considering the what and how, one is drawn naturally to the question of why. One answer could be: to preserve and perpetuate life.*

*In ancient Greek the word for butterfly was ψυχη (psyche), which also meant soul. This gives us a key to the mystery of nature. Just as the butterfly is not completely aware of all the stages ahead, but contains all its potential within it, so we gradually unfold our inner wings and become transformed into something higher.*

*Miha Kosir*

## The Mevlevi Path

**Sufism is one of the spiritual paths which emphasises the mystical side of Islamic teachings. It derives from the Arabic term for a mystic, *Sufi*, which is in turn derived from *suf*, “wool”, probably in reference to the woollen garments worn by early Islamic ascetics. Sufism may also be related to the word *Saf*, which means purity. Purity means to eliminate the foreign elements from the essence of something, which ultimately leads to discovering and eliciting one’s real self.**

The Mevlevi path (Mevleviye) is one of the most well-known of the Sufi orders, which was founded in 1273 by Mevlana Jalaleddin Rumi’s followers after his death. The Order was started by Rumi’s son, Sultan Veled Celebi in Konya, Turkey, from where it gradually spread throughout the Ottoman Empire.

### Rumi’s teachings

Perhaps the most important concept in Rumi’s teachings is “Tawhid” which means oneness, the unity of everything. Tawhid is the affirmation of the Divine Unity. It is independent of multiplicity and change. It is the manifestation of the One principle which is necessary being, on which all things depend for their existence. Tawhid, the doctrine of union, states that the whole universe is a reflection of this union and the ultimate aim of man is to understand and live this idea, which is also the ultimate aim of Sufism.

The most emphasized theme in Rumi’s teachings is the love of the beloved. The purpose of all relationships is to understand and love the Divine. Love is the motivation for giving, sacrificing and improving as a human being. The Divine love exists within the essence of human beings; however, because of many distractions we may not hear or feel this love. Once it has been heard or felt as a glimpse, man should work on himself to hear and increase this Love.

Rumi believed passionately in the use of music, poetry and dance as a path for reaching God. For Rumi, music helped devotees to focus their whole being on the divine. It was from these ideas that the practice of the whirling Dervishes

developed into a ritual form. His teachings became the basis for the order of the Mevlevi which his son Sultan Walad organised. Rumi encouraged Sema, the sacred dance which represents a mystical journey of spiritual ascent through mind and love to the Perfect One. In this journey, the seeker symbolically turns towards the truth, grows through love, abandons the ego, finds the truth and arrives at the Perfect. The seeker then returns from this spiritual journey, with greater maturity, to love and to be of service to the whole of creation without discrimination with regard to beliefs, races, classes and nations.

Today, there are Mevlevi Orders all around the world and schools studying Rumi’s teachings. Perhaps his universal ideas and his call to Love



Whirling dervishes at the Mausoleum of Mevlana, Konya, Turkey

are the main reasons why Rumi’s teachings attract many seekers, as expressed in his poem:

“Come, come, whoever you are.

Wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving — it doesn’t matter,

Ours is not a caravan of despair.

Come, even if you have broken your vow a hundred times,

Come, come again, come.”

*Pinar Akhan*

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE

# The Crisis of Western Education

by Julian Scott

Due to the global nature of today's society and the dominance of Western culture over the last few centuries, the crisis of 'Western' education actually implies a crisis of education worldwide and is therefore something that concerns us all.

Many great philosophers and statesmen have recognized the central importance of education in society. Plato dedicates a substantial part of his 'Republic' to the theme and Napoleon said: "Of all political questions, education is perhaps the most important".

Education is not just about learning facts and figures. Nor is it merely about learning a skill that will enable us to get a job. It is essentially about transmitting the values of a culture from one generation to the next. Failure to transmit those values will result in the culture losing its essence and ultimately decaying and dying.

If we look at education in this light, then we will realise that our focus should not be on the technical



side of education but upon its aims.

We can analyse the aims of education into a number of different functions:

- 1) The function of forming good citizens.
- 2) The function of guiding the human being towards the realization of a higher spiritual goal.
- 3) A technical function.

[Read more in the next issue...](#)

# Upcoming Events

See our website for more details.  
[www.newacropolisuk.org](http://www.newacropolisuk.org)

**Mon 18 – Thurs 21 Nov, 7 pm**

**World Philosophy Week**

4 evenings of talks, food and dialogue celebrating the 2,400th Anniversary of the Foundation of Plato's Academy.

**Mon 25 Nov, 7 pm**

**COURSE: Know Thyself – Study Philosophy**

16-week course starting Mon 25 Nov, 7 pm.

**Wed 11 Dec, 7.30 pm**

**TALK: An Introduction to Mystery Traditions**

Speaker: Ken Rees.

**Wed 22 Jan, 7.30 pm**

**TALK: Astrology and the 7 Hermetic Principles**

Speaker: Israel Ajose D. Psych. Astrol.

**Sat 25 - Sun 26 Jan**

**SEMINAR: Ayurveda and the Mind**

Leader: Dr Eduardo Cardona.

